

**Sustainable Food Policy Board
84th Legislative Session Update
4/27/15**

Stats to Know:

- Out of the 140 day session, there are 35 days left.
- Of the 6,257 bills filed this session, only two have passed (this does not include House Concurrent resolutions and Senate Concurrent resolutions).
- Most bills having to do with food or agriculture policy are heard in agriculture, health, or human services committees. If they deal with public education in any way, they may be heard in an education committee.
- The ONLY bill the Legislature must pass this session is the budget.

Hunger/Food Security Bills

HB 1973, HB 620, HB 3463: All would require a photo ID to be on Lone Star Cards. Currently, no photo is required on cards, and cards are issued per household. By federal law, retailers cannot deny SNAP purchases if a photo doesn't match the card. Status: HB 3463 has passed out of committee, and is moving to the House floor.

HB 570: Would remove the “full family sanction” that reduces SNAP benefits for an entire household when a single member falls out of compliance. Status: pending in committee.

HB 1267 and HB 840: Would reduce (HB 1267) or remove (HB 840) Texas' current lifetime ban on convicted drug felons receiving SNAP benefits. Status: pending in committee.

HB 1258/SB 936: Would deny SNAP to individuals who were more than one month delinquent on child support payments. Status: pending in committee.

HB 1259: Would place a lifetime ban on the receipt of SNAP benefits by any individual who failed to comply with the state's strict work requirements more than two times. Status: pending in committee.

HB 1485: Would establish a Texas grocery access investment fund program. Status: voted out of House committee.

HB 1616: Would establish a pilot program for SNAP recipients to purchase produce at farmer's markets. (“double dollars”) Status: pending in committee.

HB 3290: Would create a farm-to-school community connections pilot program. Status: pending in committee.

Agriculture

HB 91: Would allow licensed farmers to sell raw milk at farmers' markets and to make delivery arrangements with their customers. Status: pending in committee.

HB 1846: would require Texas state agencies to be open and transparent in implementing new federal food safety regulations. Status: voted out of House committee.

HB 262: would provide liability protection for landowners who allow their property to be used for nonprofit community gardens. Status: voted out of House committee.

SB 1766/HB 3764: would allow very small-scale beekeepers to sell their honey directly to consumers at their home, farmers market, farm stand, or at a municipal, county, or nonprofit event, without processing it in a commercial kitchen. Status: voted out of Senate, on its way to House.

HB 1900: would revise the definition of qualified open-space land to require a chief appraiser to distinguish between the degree of intensity required for various agricultural production methods, including organic, sustainable, pastured poultry, rotational grazing, and other uncommon production methods or systems. The bill would revise the definition of agricultural use to include the production of fruits and vegetables and to include the use of land for a nonprofit community garden. The bill would define "nonprofit community garden" as land gardened by a nonprofit organization in a neighborhood or community for the purpose of providing without profit fresh produce for the benefit of the residents of the neighborhood or community. Status: voted out of House committee.

SB 1907/HB 3298: directs the Texas Water Development Board to conduct a study on how to develop a statewide water market and conveyance network – essentially, a massive grid to allow water to be shipped all around the state easily. Status: voted out of Senate committee.